



Climate change and farmers' mental health: Risks and responses

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Abstract:

Climate change is exacerbating climate variability, evident in more frequent and severe weather-related disasters, such as droughts, fires, and floods. Most of what is known about the possible effects of climate change on rural mental health relates to prolonged drought. But though drought is known to be a disproportionate and general stressor, evidence is mixed and inconclusive. Over time, like drought other weather-related disasters may erode the social and economic bases on which farming communities depend. Rural vulnerability to mental health problems is greatly increased by socioeconomic disadvantage. Related factors may compound this, such as reduced access to health services as communities decline and a "stoical" culture that inhibits help-seeking. Australia has the world's most variable climate and is a major global agricultural producer. Yet despite Australia's (and, especially, rural communities') dependence on farmers' well-being and success, there is very little-and inconclusive-quantitative evidence about farmers' mental health. The aim of this review is to consider, with a view to informing other countries, how climate change and related factors may affect farmers' mental health in Australia. That information is a prerequisite to identifying, selecting, and evaluating adaptive strategies, to lessen the risks of adverse mental health outcomes. The authors identify the need for a systematic epidemiology of the mental health of farmers facing increasing climate change- related weather adversity.

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Resource Description

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Extreme Weather Event

Extreme Weather Event: Drought

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Rural

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Non-United States

Non-United States: Australasia

Health Impact: ☒

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Mental Health/Stress

Mental Health Effect/Stress: Mood Disorder

Mitigation/Adaptation: ☒

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern: ☒

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Workers

Other Vulnerable Population: farmers

Resource Type: ☒

format or standard characteristic of resource

Review

Resilience: ☒

capacity of an individual, community, or institution to dynamically and effectively respond or adapt to shifting climate impact circumstances while continuing to function

A focus of content

Timescale: ☒

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment: ☒

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content